

Basic Bible Study Tools



Small groups engaged in Bible study sometimes fall back on simple questions, such as: What do you “think” this verse means? How do you “feel” about it? If that is unproductive, they may default to a pre-packed study guide.



Many home groups focus on fellowship and supporting one another (emotionally and practically). And respect other people’s opinions, and try to achieve consensus or agreement.

This is important and valuable, but this approach can also cause problems when it is applied to Bible study. If we believe that Scripture is the inspired word - which reveals the mind and heart of the LORD - then we need to diligently search out what it “actually says and means”.

| The “Personal Opinion” Approach | Studying What the Bible Actually Says |
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| | |
| <p>How does everyone feel about this topic ?</p> <p>What do you personally believe about it ?</p> <p>What do you think this verse means ?</p> <p>What is your opinion about how to apply it ?</p> <div style="text-align: center; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>SHOW of HANDS</p> </div> <p>OK, who agrees that this is the “meaning” ?</p> | <div style="text-align: center; background-color: #333; color: white; padding: 5px; font-weight: bold; margin-bottom: 10px;"> Letting Scripture Speak for Itself </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Injecting personal opinion</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Injecting a figurative meaning</p> </div> </div> <div style="text-align: center; margin: 10px 0;"> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Adding or subtracting words, phrases, books, etc.</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Taking a passage out of context</p> </div> </div> |

Although disciplined Bible study involves some work and effort, there are many benefits.



“We know that the more people cook at home, the healthier their diet, the fewer calories they consume, and the less likely they are to be obese or develop type 2 diabetes. A growing body of scientific evidence supports teaching patients how to cook meals at home as an effective medical intervention for improving diet quality, weight loss, and diabetes prevention.” [Harvard University Health blog](#)

In the same way, our spiritual life will also be healthier if we learn to study scripture, rather than relying on “take out food” prepared by others. The apostle Paul commended the Berean believers who “*examined the Scriptures every day to see if these teachings were true.*” (Acts 17:11)

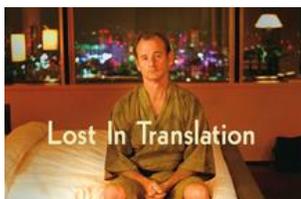
Here are some simple Bible study strategies:

What is the Context?



A verse is only one element on the “plate” of a larger context. [BibleProject](#) is a nonprofit animation studio on YouTube that produces short videos that give a historical and theological overview of a book (as well as key words / concepts in scripture, and ways to approach studying scripture).

What do the Words Mean?



Bible translations attempt to capture the meaning of the original text (Hebrew / Greek), but sometimes these are “approximations”.

[BibleHub](#) has a free website (and phone app) with many useful tools for understanding (and interpreting) the meaning of a word / verse.

What have Others Learned in In-Depth Study?



[Learn to Think Biblically](#) provides in-depth study and commentary from Pastor Mike Winger.

[Ligonier Ministries](#) provides a collection of teaching and sermons by theologian R C Sproul.

[Alisa Childers](#) and [Melissa Dougherty](#) provide Apologetics videos on relevant topics facing believers today (such as “deconstruction” / “progressive Christianity”).

Example of Some Study Tools on BibleHub



The Search bar lets you search for words, phrases.

The light blue bar (underneath Search bar) allows you to select a specific Bible translation.

Clicking on “Parallel” (when you have selected a particular verse) brings up the following screen.

Verse (Click for Chapter)

New International Version
For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.

New Living Translation
For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.

English Standard Version
for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.

Berean Study Bible
For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, love, and self-control.

Berean Literal Bible
For God has not given us a spirit of cowardice, but of power, and of love, and of self-control.

King James Bible
For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

New King James Version
For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

New American Standard Bible
For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.

Context

Patience in Persecution
⁶For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. ⁷For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, love, and self-control. ⁸So do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, or of me, His prisoner. Instead, join me in suffering for the gospel by the power of God....
[Berean Study Bible · Download](#)

Cross References

Isaiah 11:2
The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him—the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and strength, the Spirit of knowledge and fear of the LORD.

John 14:27
Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled; do not be afraid.

Romans 8:15
For you did not receive a spirit of slavery that returns you to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!"

Clicking on "Interlin" will bring up the verse along with the original language (Greek or Hebrew).

◀ 2 Timothy 1:7 ▶

2 Timothy 1 - Click for Chapter

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|--------------|---------|----------|----------|
| 3756 [e] | 1063 [e] | 1325 [e] | 1473 [e] | 3588 [e] | 2316 [e] | 4151 [e] | 1167 [e] | 235 [e] | 1411 [e] | 2532 [e] |
| ou | gar | edōken | hēmin | ho | Theos | pneuma | deilias | alla | dynameōs | kai |
| 7 οὐ | γάρ | ἔδωκεν | ἡμῖν | ὁ | Θεὸς | πνεῦμα | δειλίας | , ἀλλὰ | δυνάμεως | , καὶ |
| Not | for | has given | us | - | God | a spirit | of cowardice | but | of power | and |
| Adv | Conj | V-AIA-3S | PPro-D1P | Art-NMS | N-NMS | N-ANS | N-GFS | Conj | N-GFS | Conj |

| | | |
|---------|----------|-----------------|
| 26 [e] | 2532 [e] | 4995 [e] |
| agapēs | kai | sōphronismou |
| ἀγάπης | , καὶ | σῶφρονισμοῦ . |
| of love | and | of self-control |
| N-GFS | Conj | N-GMS |

Clicking on the number above a word will bring up more information about the meaning of the word.

◀ 4995. sōphronismos ▶

Strong's Concordance

sōphronismos: self-control

Original Word: σωφρονισμός, οὐ, ὁ

Part of Speech: Noun, Masculine

Transliteration: sōphronismos

Phonetic Spelling: (so-fro-nis-mos')

Definition: self-control

Usage: self-control, self-discipline, prudence.

HELPS Word-studies

Cognate: 4995 (a masculine noun derived from 4998 /*sōphrōn*, "truly moderate") – properly, safe-minded, issuing in prudent ("sensible") behavior that "fits" a situation, i.e. aptly acting out *God's will* by doing what *He* calls sound reasoning (used only in 2 Tim 1:7). See 4998 (*sōphrōn*).

Englishman's Concordance

2 Timothy 1:7 N-GMS

GRK: ἀγάπης καὶ σωφρονισμοῦ

NAS: but of power and love *and discipline*.

KJV: of love, and *of a sound mind*.

INT: of love and *of wise discretion*

Strong's Greek 4995

1 Occurrence

σωφρονισμοῦ – 1 Occ.